

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The present listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (currently amended): A tube support bracket that comprises a circular tube-receiving aperture and an annular, castellated collar abutting said aperture, said aperture and collar being sized for receiving therethrough in close-fitting relationship a metal tube, said collar being formed having a plurality of spaced-apart, axial tabs sized for swaging against said received metal tube to generate a hoop stress and bite said received metal tube, wherein an inner surface of each of said collar tabs is formed having at least one axial groove formed therein, said groove being configured for receiving exterior regions of said received tube when the collar is swaged tightly against the tube to thereby lock the tube in the collar and thus in the support bracket.

Claim 2. (canceled)

Claim 3. (original): The tube support bracket as claimed in claim 1, wherein said collar is formed integrally as a part of said support bracket.

Claim 4. (original): The tube support bracket as claimed in claim 1, wherein said support bracket and collar are formed from a ductile metal alloy.

Claim 5. (original): The tube support bracket as claimed in claim 4, wherein said ductile metal alloy comprises an aluminum-coated steel material.

Claim 6. (original): The tube support bracket as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plurality of axial tabs comprise four, equally spaced-apart tabs.

Claim 7. (currently amended): ~~The tube support bracket as claimed in claim 1,~~ A tube support bracket that comprises a circular tube-receiving aperture and an annular, castellated collar abutting said aperture, said aperture and collar being sized for receiving therethrough in close-fitting relationship a metal tube, said collar being formed having a plurality of spaced-apart, axial tabs sized for swaging against said received metal tube to generate a hoop stress and bite said received metal tube, wherein said collar is formed in a draw-punched region of said support bracket.

Claim 8. (canceled)

Claim 9. (previously presented): A tube support bracket that comprises a circular tube-receiving aperture and an annular, castellated collar abutting said aperture, said aperture and collar being sized for receiving therethrough in close-fitting relationship an aluminum alloy heat exchanger tube, said collar being formed having a plurality of spaced-apart, axial tabs sized for swaging against said aluminum alloy heat exchanger tube to generate a hoop stress against said tube and to bite into said tube, an inner surface of each of said collar tabs being formed having at least one axial groove therein, said groove being configured for, receiving exterior regions of said received tube when the collar is swaged tightly against the tube to thereby lock the tube in the collar and thus in the support bracket.

Claim 10. (original): The tube support bracket as claimed in claim 9, wherein said collar is formed integrally as a part of said support bracket, and wherein said support bracket and collar are formed from an aluminum-coated, ductile steel alloy.

Claim 11. (previously presented): The tube support bracket as claimed in claim 9, wherein said collar is formed in a draw-punched region of said support bracket and wherein said plurality of axial tabs comprise four, equally spaced-apart tabs.

Claims 12-19 (canceled)

Claim 20. (previously presented): A combination, said combination comprising:

a metal tube; and

a metal tube support bracket having a circular tube-receiving aperture, and an annular, castellated collar abutting said aperture, said metal tube received within said circular tube-receiving aperture and said collar being swaged against said metal tube and biting into said metal tube, wherein said collar is formed from a plurality of spaced-apart, axial tabs, the inner surface of each of said tabs having at least one axial groove formed therein, and wherein the swaging of said collar presses said axial tabs against said metal tube to produce a hoop stress against said metal tube and causes said axial tabs to bite into said metal tube thereby locking the tube to the bracket.

Claim 21. (previously presented): The combination as claimed in claim 20, wherein said collar is formed integrally as a part of said support bracket.

Claim 22. (previously presented): The combination as claimed in claim 20, wherein said collar is formed from a ductile metal alloy.

Claim 23. (previously presented): The combination as claimed in claim 22, wherein said ductile metal alloy comprises an aluminum-coated steel material.

Claim 24. (previously presented): The combination as claimed in claim 20, wherein said plurality of axial tabs comprise four, equally spaced-apart tabs.

Claim 25. (previously presented): The combination as claimed in claim 20, wherein said collar is formed in a draw-punched region of said support bracket.

Claim 26. (previously presented): The combination as claimed in claim 20, wherein said received metal tube is constructed from an aluminum alloy.

Claim 27. (previously presented): A structure of a metal tube and a metal tube support bracket, said structure comprising:

a metal tube; and

a metal tube support bracket having a circular tube-receiving aperture, and an annular, castellated collar abutting said aperture, said metal tube received within said circular tube-receiving aperture and said collar being swaged against said metal tube and biting into said metal tube, wherein said collar is formed from a plurality of spaced-apart, axial tabs, and wherein the swaging of said collar presses said axial tabs against said metal tube to produce a hoop stress against said metal tube and causes said axial tabs to bite into said metal tube thereby locking the tube to the bracket.

Claim 28. (previously presented): The structure as claimed in claim 27, wherein an inner surface of each of said axial tabs is formed having at least one axial groove formed therein, said groove being configured for receiving exterior regions of said received tube when the collar is swaged tightly against the metal tube.

Claim 29. (previously presented): The structure as claimed in claim 27, wherein said collar is formed integrally as a part of said support bracket.

Claim 30. (previously presented): The structure as claimed in claim 27, wherein said collar is formed from a ductile metal alloy.

Claim 31. (previously presented): The structure as claimed in claim 30, wherein said ductile metal alloy comprises an aluminum-coated steel material.

Claim 32. (previously presented): The structure as claimed in claim 27, wherein said collar is formed in a draw-punched region of said support bracket.

Claim 33. (previously presented): The structure as claimed in claim 27, wherein said received metal tube is constructed from an aluminum alloy.